

Jessica at New Hampshire Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs Health Profession Opportunity Project (HPOP)

Jessica Hodgdon was at a low time in her life, with no job and no direction, when she was introduced by New Hampshire Employment Security to the Health Profession Opportunity Project (HPOP), supported by the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. HPOP gave her the second chance she needed, providing opportunities she feels she would not have had elsewhere. She says, "At first the tests, interviews, and paperwork seemed endless, but I knew it would be all worth it if I could get accepted into the program. I knew back then what a great program this was, and I wanted to be a part of it. I wanted to change my career and life by letting someone guide me down the right path and provide for me where I couldn't."

Once accepted in HPOP, Jessica was introduced to "supportive, informative, caring people" who, she says, "became my mentors in a way." She enrolled in a Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) program, graduated, and now has an LNA license for nursing as well as her CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) certification. "I was assisted with uniforms, shoes, a watch, mileage reimbursement, and the confidence that I can change my career at my age and be successful doing it." She then enrolled at Great Bay Community College for the Registered Nurse (RN) program, where she is currently taking classes to obtain that lifelong goal.

Jessica is very grateful to the HPOG program: "Without HPOP providing not only the funding for all of this, but also helping me build up my self-esteem, I would not be where I am today. The program staff have taken the time to meet with me or email me or call me and provide the best guidance and counseling I can ask for. They truly care about my success and root me on like a cheering squad. Without that support, I fear I would still be unemployed or working in the same career as I was before and just as miserable, with no passion for my work."

Now she is working in the healthcare field in a hospital and says, "I feel I am on top of the world! I am currently a patient transporter and getting my foot in the door at the hospital will be a big advantage when I look for a nursing position. Because of HPOP and my dedication, we as a team have succeeded in pointing me in the right direction, and I have fulfilled my dreams of going back to school, feeling self-worth, and becoming a successful part of society."